



# HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA

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## USFK MEDICAL ADVISORY (22 May 2008) 2008 South Korean Avian Influenza Outbreak Update

South Korea continues to experience its worst outbreak of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), also known as Bird Flu. Bird populations have been affected all over Korea, to include Seoul and Busan. The strain that has swept through Korea over the past six weeks is a type that has not caused any human infections worldwide, as opposed to the kind found in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Viet Nam and Thailand, which has a mortality rate of over 50% in infected humans.

HPAI and other avian influenza viruses infect wild birds and poultry (e.g., chickens, ducks). The H5N1 strain of HPAI has now caused high mortality in bird populations throughout Korea. Although HPAI virus is a disease of birds, it will also occasionally infect humans. When humans do contract HPAI, it may result in significant illness or death. ***While there is no current evidence of efficient human-to-human transmission of the HPAI virus, it could mutate and become capable of efficient human-to-human transmission.***

As a result of the recent Republic of Korea (ROK) HPAI outbreak in poultry, Korean veterinary and public health officials have enacted comprehensive, layered levels of containment around the infected poultry farms. The ROK government is destroying (culling) potentially infected birds in order to stamp out HPAI. Korean government officials have also implemented a country-wide HPAI surveillance program in order to quickly detect the "Bird Flu;" this measure was implemented so the government can employ containment measures, then eradicate any new outbreaks of the HPAI that are discovered. Recently, Seoul quarantine officials culled all 15,000 poultry raised in farms, restaurants, schools and homes in Seoul, to curb the spread of bird flu following two outbreaks in the capital. Busan officials culled all 13,000 poultry in a 3km radius around an infected duck farm in Busan

***This recent outbreak of the HPAI poses minimal if any risk to U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) personnel.*** However, it is noteworthy to mention that risks may exist from eating uncooked or undercooked poultry or poultry products on the economy (such as eggs "over easy" or "easy over," eggnog, or hollandaise sauce made with raw eggs). The USFK Commissaries and AAFES Exchanges/Shoppettes only stock eggs from the U.S. and U.S. government-approved Korean poultry sources. Eggs from the Korean farms undergo routine testing, and there has never been a record of HPAI viruses being detected. If such an outbreak would occur, there is a rapid produce recall system in place to inform and protect USFK personnel from infection. All Korean eggs sold in USFK Commissaries and AAFES establishments are pasteurized in order to kill bacteria and viruses (rendering them safe for the USFK consumer). However, eggs produced by infected chickens may harbor the virus within the egg. But even with pasteurization, eggs should never be eaten raw or undercooked.

USFK Preventive Medicine and Veterinary Services personnel routinely inspect food concessions located on USFK installations. As of this date, the only USFK eating locations not compliant with USFK Food Sanitation requirements are the KATUSA Snack Bars (and their equivalent eateries on USAF, USN, and USMC installations). USFK personnel are strongly cautioned about eating undercooked poultry and/or eggs, regardless of who prepares the food.

Cases of human HPAI infections worldwide have mostly been the result of direct contact with infected poultry or with surfaces contaminated with their feces. Common exposures typically occur during slaughter/culling, defeathering, and butchering. **Direct Contact is defined as: touching birds (well-appearing, sick, or dead); touching surfaces contaminated with bird feces; eating uncooked or partially cooked poultry meat or eggs; and closely observing or participating in the butchering, slaughter or culling of birds.** A person is NOT at risk of H5N1 infection who simply walks by, watches, or is in the same area as living or dead birds.

**Personnel are strongly cautioned against handling dead birds** - if you do handle a dead bird, immediately wash your hands thoroughly (15-20 seconds) with soap and water. Personnel should not have direct contact with wild birds or birds in aviaries, zoos, parks or on the street (such as the street markets located throughout Korea). Personnel should avoid ponds or bodies of water containing ducks or other waterfowl, and they should not enter poultry farms, bird markets, processing plants, slaughter houses. Finally, personnel should not feed birds by hand, with bird feeders, or by any other method. All bird feeders should be removed from outside locations on USFK installations.

Many wild bird populations consider USFK installations “sanctuaries” – because of this fact, some housing areas are renown for the ducks, pheasant, and various other bird populations. USFK personnel are strongly discouraged from feeding any birds during the current Avian Influenza outbreak, and they are also discouraged from allowing pet dogs to consume wild bird droppings, and pet cats from roaming free to hunt wild birds, for fear that these pet animals could contract Avian Influenza from this exposure.

The USFK Surgeon's Office and the 18<sup>th</sup> Medical Command (MEDCOM) Force Health Protection Office continue to monitor the current situation and are coordinating and collaborating with Korean Public Health officials. These offices, in collaboration with the USFK Public Affairs Office, will provide additional information and advisories to USFK personnel as it becomes available.

**General safety precautions that will help protect USFK personnel from any potential infection with HPAI virus include:**

- Avoid eating uncooked or undercooked poultry or poultry products;
- Avoid all direct contact with poultry farms, bird markets, slaughter houses, or process plants;
- Avoid all contact with poultry being butchered for market or culled for safety purposes
- Avoid contact with poultry feces or secretions;
- Thoroughly cook all foods from poultry, including eggs (no “runny” yolks) and poultry blood (no “pink” parts);
- Utilize proper hand hygiene practices by using soap and water for 15-20 seconds (or a waterless, alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel when soap is not available), especially when handling poultry or poultry products;
- Avoid contact with poultry and other birds suspected or known to be infected with HPAI virus;
- Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing;
- **Get your flu shot today – available at USFK medical treatment facilities;**
- If your occupation involves picking up or handling dead birds, use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling dead birds and ensure that your occupational health exam is current. PPE includes rubber/neoprene gloves (not latex surgical gloves) and safety goggles or a face shield for everyone in contact with dead birds, plus a paper or surgical mask if the bird is in a wet environment. In addition, when collecting 3 or more birds in close proximity outdoors or collecting one or more birds in confined indoor spaces, add a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator, N-95 or better, plus disposable gowns or coveralls or cleanable waders/raingear, and rubber boots or boot covers.
- Monitor your health within 10 days after any possible direct contact with wild birds or with uncooked or undercooked poultry; if you develop flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat and/or muscle aches), shortness of breath, pneumonia (lung infection), diarrhea or eye infection). See your healthcare provider immediately as these may be early symptoms of HPAI.



**Additional information on Avian Influenza can be found at the following websites:**

1. U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/news/influenzaWebsite/pages/Pandemic.htm>
2. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration: <http://www.osha.gov/dsg/guidance/avian-flu.html>
3. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: <http://pandemicflu.gov/>

<b>Dead Birds Collection Contacts-USFK Installations</b> as of 19 May 2008		
<b>Garrisons/ Installations</b>	<b>Duty Hours 08:00 - 17:00 hrs (Mon-Fri)</b>	<b>Off-Duty Hours/ Weekends</b>
<b>Cp Casey Installations</b>	<b>730-3726 (Pest Control Shop) 730-3729 (Service Order Section)</b>	<b>730-2093 (Fire Department)</b>
<b>Uijongbu Installations</b>	<b>732-7129 (Pest Control Shop) 732-7714/7715 (Service Order Section)</b>	<b>732-7476 (Fire Department)</b>
<b>All USAG-Yongsan Installations</b>	<b>724-4176/7228/7033 (Pest Control Shop)</b>	<b>724-3360 (Service Order Section-it will be transferred to the Fire Dept.)</b>
<b>Cp Humphreys</b>	<b>753-7409 (Pest Control Shop) 753-6068 (Service Order Section)</b>	<b>753-6173 (Fire Department)</b>
<b>Cp Long/Eagle</b>	<b>721-3440 (Pest Control Shop) 721-3320 (Service Order Section)</b>	<b>721-2249 (Fire Department)</b>
<b>Daegu-Busan Installations</b>	<b>764-5088 (Pest control Shop) 768-7969 (Service Order Section)</b>	<b>764-4120 (Fire Department)</b>
<b>Cp Carroll</b>	<b>765-8485 (Pest Control Shop) 765-8322 (Service Order Section)</b>	<b>764-4120 (Fire Department)</b>
<b>Chinhae Navy Base</b>	<b>762-5415</b>	<b>011-858-2498</b>
<b>Osan Air Base</b>	<b>784-4775</b>	<b>784-4710</b>
<b>Kunsan Air Base</b>	<b>782-5295</b>	<b>782-4471</b>
<b>Camp Mujuk</b>	<b>767-4462</b>	<b>767-4080</b>

